

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS**Ban on sale of Gutka**

*243. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are seriously considering a ban on manufacture and sale/use of Gutka from new year;

(b) whether rumours of such a ban by Government on Gutka have caused a steep fall in Arecanut prices in the mandis of Karnataka and whether Arecanut growers are saddled with unsold stocks;

(c) whether in the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, the commodity Arecanut used in the manufacture of Gutka is termed as injurious to health whereas Arecanut has curative and therapeutic properties as proven over many generations; and

(d) whether there would be a similar ban on tobacco and tobacco products like cigarettes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKALAKSHMI): (a) to (d) The Government has no proposal, at present, to ban the sale of Gutka under PFA Rules, 1955. There are no standards for Arecanut under the PFA Rules, 1955. However, arecanut is permitted to be used as one of the ingredients in Pan masala, standards for which have been prescribed under the aforesaid rules. Arecanut is a known carcinogen, due to presence of alkaloids and some of the studies have found chewing of arecanut/Pan masala to be associated with the development of oral sub mucous fibrosis. Rule 42(ZZZ)(6) under PFA Rules, 1955, provides that every package of Supari and advertisement relating thereto shall carry the following warning in conspicuous and bold print namely.

(Chewing of supari is injurious to health)

The information on prices of Arecanut are not maintained Centrally.

Tobacco and tobacco products are covered under "The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003"

and the Act does not provide for ban on tobacco or tobacco products but only prohibits sale of such products to persons less than 18 years of age. This Act also prohibits sale of such tobacco products within a radius of 100 yards of any educational institution.

Travelling without tickets in trains

***245. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that relatives and aides of Ministers and Legislators have been found travelling without tickets in trains and consequently passengers with reserved berths have been denied accommodation;

(b) if so, the details of such incidents and the action taken in each case during 2005 and 2006; and

(c) what kind of instructions have been issued to the Railway Authorities in this regard to prevent recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (c) Some incidents of irregular travel by the relatives and aides of Ministers and Legislators do come to notice. Such cases are dealt with as per extant provisions of the Railways Act, 1989. Any passenger entering a reserved coach and unauthorisedly occupying a berth/seat reserved for the use of another passenger, is liable to be removed from the coach and penalized as per rules. However, no separate statistics is maintained in this regard.

Pending rail projects of Uttar Pradesh

***248. SHRI ABU ASIMAZMI:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of railway projects from Uttar Pradesh which are pending for completion;

(b) the amount allocated for these projects during each of the last three years alongwith the amount released, project-wise;

(c) the details of the projects running behind the schedule; and

(d) the action being taken for their completion and by when these are expected to be completed?